

A County-Wide Assessment of the Needs of Families and Children Wood County, OH 2010-2011

Prepared For:

The Wood County Family and Children First Council Prepared By:

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Wood County Needs Assessment

- 3-phase county-wide survey funded by the Wood County Commissioners
- Directed by the Wood County Family and Children First Council
- Designed and carried out by staff from the Department of Psychology, Bowling Green State University

A Three Phase Assessment

 To assess the broad needs/problems (e.g., mental and physical health problems) of families with children and adolescents in Wood County, their knowledge and utilization of services, and barriers to seeking services

Phase 1:

- Integrative summary of reports of needs assessments conducted in Wood County between 1998-2010 to identify gaps in understanding of needs for families of children and adolescents
- Survey of parents of children ages o-5 and 6-12
- Phase 2: survey of adolescents (ages 13-18) and their parents
- Phase 3: interviews of key informants who are knowledgeable about transitional youth (late adolescents/young adults, ages 18-24 who, after high school, did not go on for additional education)

Phase One: Integrative Summary of Existing Needs Assessments

- We reviewed and integrated results across 6 existing needs assessments completed in Wood County from 1998-2010:
- County-Wide Assessment of the Needs of Families and Children, 1998
 - 201 county residents, 112 key informants¹
- Wood County Alcohol Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services System Assessment (ADAMHS), 2006
 - 34 key informants¹
- Strategic Alliance Partnership Grant, 2007
 - Review of evaluation projects and reports (1992-2006); interviews with 22 key informants, status assessments of 19 agencies
- Wood County Community Health Assessment Survey (WCHA), 2007-2008
 - 492 youth aged 12-18 (adult survey not reviewed)
- Wood County Summit on Children, 2009
 - Approximately 50 key informants¹
- Wood County Youth Survey (WCYS), 2008, 2010
 - 9529 adolescents in 2008, 8486 adolescents in 2010

¹Dubow, E. F., Tompsett, C., Domoff, S, Kryszak, E., Meers, M., Reinemann, L., & Veits, G. (2010). *Wood County Needs Assessment: Integrative Summary of Existing Reports*. Department of Psychology, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.

Results from Integrative Summary

- Rates of substance abuse appear to be declining over time, but still a problem
- Substance use is associated with a variety of mental health problems and risky behaviors, supporting the need for services for co-occurring problems
- Mental health problems of county youth include depression, bullying, risky sexual behaviors, and exposure to types of violence
- Less data on physical health problems, but common issues were obesity and irregular doctor's and dentist's visits
- Gaps in knowledge
 - Many studies relied on interviews with service providers
 - More information is needed on how families perceive their own and their neighbors' needs for services
 - More information on whether families are aware of existing services, and/or how they may experience barriers to accessing those services
 - Regarding assessment of mental and physical health problems, none of the reports reviewed assessed problems among children younger than 10 years old
 - Some topics, such as a broader variety of mental and physical health problems,
 remain to be assessed in more detail

Sample

- 300 parents:
 - 143 parents of 0- to 5-year olds
 - 157 parents of 6-to 12-year olds
- 12 school districts
- 88% of the respondents were Caucasian; half have lived in the county for over 20 years
- Representative of county residents in terms of income and education levels

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- Major Findings
 - Economic Issues
 - Over one-third reported that their family has been affected by unemployment
 - Consequences of the current economic climate are reflected in the problems families are experiencing:
 - Need for better health care
 - Problems running the household (e.g., budget)
 - Child obesity
 - Economic problems are likely affecting barriers to seeking services for problems (e.g., paying for services)
 - Addressing the economic downturn is a major priority for county and state officials, certainly in terms of its effect on the physical and mental health needs of families with young children

Physical and Mental Health Issues

- Over one-quarter indicated that a serious physical illness affected their family
- 0-5 year olds, the following were the most prevalent health problems:
 - Stuttering, stammering, and speech problems (18%)
 - Asthma (12%)
 - Hearing problems (6%); Developmental delay affecting learning (6%)
- 6-12 year olds, the following problems were most prevalent
 - Dental Problems (15%)
 - Asthma (17%)
 - ADD or ADHD (13%)
- 16% reported that asthma and obesity were problems in their family
 - We calculated BMI and found that 39% of children were overweight or obese (related to SES)
- Over one-quarter indicated that their child was experiencing emotional/behavioral problems, 18% had learning problems, 14% had a developmental problem/disability, and 10% had speech problems
- Significant proportions (20-30%) of these youth were not being treated

- Knowledge of Services and Barriers to Seeking Services
 - 67% indicated that "knowing where or how to get help would be confusing" for them
 - Nearly half noted other barriers to seeking services:
 - Arranging for child care
 - Being able to handle the problem on their own
 - Seeking services is a hassle, and seeking services is embarrassing
 - Some of these barriers were more frequently endorsed by lower income families
 - Need county-wide outreach efforts to educate public on services that are available, focusing on combating commonly perceived barriers

Developmental Assets

- Many parents reported:
 - Children receive high levels of support from the family
 - Children know a non-parent adult who they can go to for advice and support
 - The school provides a caring, encouraging environment
 - Children want to do well in school
 - Neighbors provide a measure of monitoring/supervision over children's behavior
- Many parents perceive high levels of support in their family, community, and child's school

Phase Two: Part 1: Results of A Survey of Adolescents

Sample

- 264 adolescents
 - 130 middle school students
 - 134 high school students
- 6 school districts
 - Bowling Green, Northwood, North Baltimore, Lake, Otsego, Penta
- 80% of the respondents were Caucasian; 62% lived in the county for 10 years or more
- Representative of county residents in terms of family education, family income

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Phase Two: Part 1: Results of A Survey of Adolescents

- Adolescents' Experiences with Problems and Stressful Events
 - 5 most common problems: anxiety and nervousness; attentional difficulties; academic stress; irritable mood; and family conflict
 - Potentially life-threatening problems:
 - 17% reported self-harm feelings
 - 17% reported eating problems (binging, purging, self- starving)
 - Most adolescents who experienced these problems reported that they were "troubling" or "extremely troubling"
 - Family problems:
 - 31% reported marked family financial stress (lost home, or parent lost job)
 - 24% reported having a family member with health/mental health issues
 - 22% reported parental separation/divorce,
 - 14% reported family alcohol/drug abuse
 - Most adolescents who experienced these problems found them to be "troubling" or "extremely troubling"
 - Significant numbers of adolescents are experiencing problems that are troubling to them which suggests a major priority for access to counseling services for families and adolescents throughout the county

Exposure to Stressful Events in the Past Year	% Reporting Event Happened IN THE PAST YEAR
Threats or see property destroyed	22%
Harassed because of skin color, religion, sexual orientation, appearance or where your family was from	19%
Seen someone attacked	17%
Someone used the internet or cell phone to bother or harass you or to spread mean words or pictures about you	17%
Someone close to you was mugged, robbed, or threatened	16%
Someone on the internet tried to talk about sexual things and you did not want to	16%
Been in a situation where physical conflict between teens and adult family members were you were concerned someone might get hurt	14%
Someone close to you been hurt or killed in a fire, accident, or natural disaster (e.g., bad storm, tornado, flood, or car accident)	14%
Been in a situation where physical conflict between adult family members were you were concerned someone might get hurt	11%
Someone you were dating threatened or did something verbally, sexually, or physically to you	9%

Exposure to these events was associated with higher levels of experiencing problems. So, adolescents who experience these stressful events are at risk and should be identified for interventions, perhaps trauma-focused individual- or group-based interventions

Phase Two: Part 1: Results of A Survey of Adolescents

- Knowledge and Utilization of Services, and Perceptions of Barriers to Seeking Services
 - Two-thirds or more had knowledge of Job and Family Services, Children's Resource Center, and the Health Department
 - 10%-20% reported having used these services
 - Nearly three-quarters indicated they would prefer to seek help from a family member or that they could handle the problem on their own than to seek services
 - Over a third were concerned that they would feel embarrassed to seek help, that their parents would find out, or that there would be confidentiality/privacy issues if they sought services
 - Yet, 75% or more would recommend to a friend who was experiencing mental health or legal issues that they seek help from a mental health counselor, doctor/physician, or another helping agency
 - County agencies should consider mounting educational efforts to allay adolescents' concerns regarding seeking services

Phase Two: Part 1: Results of A Survey of Adolescents

Sources of Support and Assets for Adolescents

- Adolescents perceived high levels of support from parents, friends, and members of the community
 - The top sources of support endorsed were "talk to an adult family member" or "talk to a friend."
 - Over 80% indicated that they could go to their family members or non-family adults and friends for help with their problems
 - Over 90% indicated they feel safe in their neighborhoods
- About half did not feel involved in the community
 - Over half did not agree that "Adults at school listen to me and respect my opinions"
 - 40% did not endorse the statement, "I want to do well in school and I do an hour or more of homework each school day"
 - 28% did not "spend 3 hours or more each week in school or community clubs, sports, or extracurricular activities"
 - 27% **did not** endorse the statement, "There is at least one adult at my school who cares about me and knows me well"
- These results suggest the need for outreach efforts by the schools and community agencies to attract those youth who do not perceive that they have access to community assets or adult social support (or lack the motivation or skills to access those assets/supports) that have been shown to facilitate their development.

Sample

- 150 parents of adolescents
- 6 school districts
 - Middle school and high school classrooms at Bowling Green, Northwood, North Baltimore, Lake, Otsego, Penta
- 90% of the respondents were Caucasian
- Representative of county residents in terms of ethnicity and income
 - Sample was slightly more educated than county residents

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- Parents' Perceptions of Adolescents' General Problems and Mental/Physical Health Conditions
- 5 most common Individual-Level adolescent problems reported by parents:
 - Irritable mood; Anxiety and nervousness; Attentional difficulties; Stress related to school performance; Weight problems
 - Parents reported their adolescents had been diagnosed with:
 - ADHD (20%); Emotional problems (18%); Asthma (15%)
 - 50% of adolescents with these problems were currently in need of treatment

- Family-Level Problems
- 20-25% reported family-related problems that would have important effects on adolescent well-being:
 - Health or mental health problems of family members; Serious financial stress in the family; Parental marital problems or divorce; and Alcohol or drug use by a family member
- Adolescents were more likely to report that they had individual-level problems (e.g., eating problems) than their parents perceived them as having experienced; but parents and adolescents reported similar levels of family-level problems
 - Critical need to assess adolescents' own perspectives, not just parents' perspectives
- Because there are many adolescents not receiving treatment for their problems, there is a continuing need for broad-based services (e.g., mental and behavioral health, physical health, employment) for parents throughout the county

- Knowledge and Utilization of Services and Barriers to Seeking Services
 - 70% or more had knowledge of Job and Family Services, Children's Resource Center, Behavioral Connections, the Health Department, and the Juvenile Court
 - 10%-20% reported having used these services
 - However, approximately 50% or more indicated that
 - Paying for services would be a problem
 - Knowing where or how to get help would be confusing
 - They could handle the problems themselves
 - County agencies should consider mounting educational efforts to address these barriers to seeking services

Parents' Perceptions of Sources of Support and Assets for Adolescents

- Parents perceived high levels of supportive family, community, and individual assets to support their adolescents' development
- Over 80% believe their adolescent "thinks life has a purpose and is optimistic," and "can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations"
- 30% **did not** endorse the statement, "My teenager wants to do well in school and does an hour or more of homework each day"
- A significant number of parents believe the community could do more to support their adolescents' development
- These results suggest the need for outreach efforts by the schools and community agencies to attract those youth who do not perceive that they have access to community assets or adult social support (or lack the motivation or skills to access those assets/supports) that have been shown to facilitate their development

Phase Three: Needs of Transitional Youth

Transitional Youth

- Older adolescents/young adults aged 18 to 24 who have not gone on to college
- Findings in this report should be understood in conjunction with results from our previous ("Phase 2") County-Wide Assessment of the Needs of Adolescents
- The combined studies describe the needs of adolescents and young adults, ages 13-24, who are in transition from youth to adulthood

Phase Three: Needs of Transitional Youth

Three-part Approach

Key Informants interviews:

 25 individuals in Wood County who provide services for transitional youth) were interviewed about needs of transitional youth, assets and available services to meet needs, challenges or barriers transitional youth face when accessing these services

Two focus groups

 9 Bowling Green School District youth ages 17-19 who are students in Penta Career Center's Community Based Intervention (CBI) program

Surveys

 10 pre-transitional (ages 17-19; still in high school) and 23 transitional (ages 18-24; no longer in high school) on their personal problems, life challenges, and barriers to accessing services for experienced life challenges

Phase Three: Interviews of Key Informants and Youth Focus Groups

- Interviews with "Key Informants" and Youth Focus Groups
 - 27 individuals from the following agencies: CRC, BC, CBI, Police, Penta,
 WESC, Health Department, JFS, JDC, Wood Lane
 - Two focus groups with nine Bowling Green School District youth ages
 17-19 who are students in Penta's CBI program
- Issues, needs, struggles, available resources, barriers to accessing resources for:
 - Education
 - Employment
 - Independent living (e.g., housing, paying basic bills, child care, accessing food, family planning)
 - Health care (medical, dental, vision)
 - Mental health and substance use services
 - Social services (access to welfare, food stamps, Medicaid)
 - Legal issues
 - Transportation

Phase Three: Interviews of Key Informants and Youth Focus Groups

Cross-Domain Themes

- Across many domains of functioning, the following concerns were identified:
 - Lack of financial resources (e.g., paying bills, maintaining housing, pursuing secondary education difficult)
 - Limited practical knowledge (youth may not know how to budget for bills, or how to complete job-related paperwork)
 - Lack of transportation, or unreliable transportation (impedes access to employment, education, and social services)
 - Inadequate adult role models or insufficient support from older adults
 - Lack of knowledge of available services

Phase Three: Interviews of Key Informants and Youth Focus Groups

- Domain-Specific Concerns
- Some concerns were more unique to specific types of domains, including:
 - Lack of budgeting skills may impact youths' ability to pay bills, retain housing, and live independently
 - Perceived stigma may prevent youth from utilizing food services or other social services, and may prevent youth from seeking professional help for mental health problems
 - Limited work experience and lack of available jobs
 - Developmental issues, such as immaturity, lack of motivation, and difficulty planning ahead, may impede youth functioning in work settings, as well as present barriers to accessing services designed for older adults
 - Youth with particular challenges such as cognitive limitations, mental health problems, and substance abuse

Phase Three: Survey of Pre-Transitional Youth

- Ten students (9 males, 1 female; ages ranged from 17-19) from the Penta CBI Program
- Problems experienced in the last year
 - Trouble with attention (8 out of the 10 students)
 - Stress related to school performance (9/10)
 - Anxiety or nervousness (6/10)
 - Moody or irritable (7/10)
 - Trouble getting along with family members (7/10)
 - Being sexually active (8/10)
 - Alcohol use (8/10)
 - Drug use (7/10)
 - Serious financial stress in the family (5/10)
- Violence and traumatic events experienced in the last year
 - Someone close to the youth who was mugged, robbed, or threatened (4/10)
 - Witnessed someone get attacked (5/10)
 - Someone close to the youth killed in a fire, accident, or natural disaster (4/10)

Phase Three: Survey of Pre-Transitional Youth

Plans for after they graduate high school

- Attend college immediately after high school (4/10)
- Look for employment instead of attending college (8/10)
- Move out of the family home (7/10)
- Confident that they will be able to get a job right out of high school (8/10)
- Confident in time management skills necessary for employment (9/10)
- Confident in their ability to survive outside the family home (9/10)
- Confident that they will have sufficient financial resources to move out of the family home (6/10)

Phase Three: Survey of Pre-Transitional Youth

Areas of challenge now and in the future

		NOW	FUTURE
•	Finding transportation	(6/10)	(4/10)
•	Finding permanent and safe housing	(6/10)	(4/10)
•	Paying basic bills	(9/10)	(6/10)
•	Getting enough food	(5/10)	(4/10)
•	Family planning	(4/10)	(5/10)
•	Medical care	(5/10)	(4/10)
•	Medications	(5/10)	(4/10)
•	Mental health services	(4/10)	(5/10)
•	Help with legal problems	(3/10)	(5/10)
•	Getting social services	(2/10)	(4/10)

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Phase Three: Survey of Transitional Youth

- 23 participants
 - 7 males, 16 females; ages ranged from 18-24; 83% Caucasian, 9% Hispanic,
 4% African American, 4% "Other"
- Seeking services from three Wood County agencies
 - Health Department, Job and Family Services, GED classes

Phase Three: Survey of Transitional Youth

- The top 5 personal problems experienced in the past year were:
 - Anxiety, nervousness (83%)
 - Serious financial stress in your family (82%)
 - Moody or irritable (78%)
 - Trouble getting along with family members (66%)
 - Trouble with attention, focus, or concentration. (61%)
 - Being sexually active. (61%)
- Of those who experienced the problem, the top 5 problems they reported as either somewhat or extremely troubling were:
 - Trouble getting along with family members (87%)
 - Serious financial stress in your family (79%)
 - Eating problems (such as binge eating, purging, or starving self). (75%)
 - Trouble with attention, focus, or concentration. (64%)
 - Stress related to your school performance (if you are in school). (60%)

Life Challenge	% who experienced the challenge	% of those experiencing the challenge who viewed it as "troubling"
Paying basic bills (e.g., heating, water, electric).	78%	61%
Getting further education I need to find a job.	70%	56%
Finding a job.	70%	88%
Getting enough food.	44%	80%
Getting help with legal problems.	43%	70%
Getting social services I need (e.g., welfare, food stamps, Medicaid).	43%	50%
Finding permanent and safe housing.	39%	44
Getting medical care I need.	39%	44%
Finding transportation.	35%	88%
Finding childcare for my children.	35%	50%
Getting dental care or vision care I need.	35%	50%
Planning for my own family.	30%	86%
Getting medications I need.	26%	33%
Getting mental health services I need.	26%	33%

	Percentage who "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that the barrier might prevent them from seeking services for the life challenge			
Barrier	Obtaining services to help with basic needs (n=19)	Obtaining education needed to secure a job (n=9)	Obtaining mental health services (n=3)	Non-specified problems (n=7)
Can handle the problem myself.	53% (10/19)	67% (6/9)	33% (1/3)	72% (5/7)
Confidentiality/privacy	32% (6/19)	22% (2/9)	100% (3/3)	72% (5/7)
Transportation	47% (9/19)	44% (4/9)	0% (0/3)	43% (3/7)
Embarrassing	63% (12/19)	22% (2/9)	33% (1/3)	72% (5/7)
Paying for services	74% (14/19)	67% (6/9)	67% (2/3)	72% (5/7)
Knowing where to get help is confusing	63% (12/19)	67% (6/9)	100% (3/3)	72% (5/7)
Would rather get help from friends/family members	37% (7/19)	44% (4/9)	33% (1/3)	72% (5/7)

Phase 3: Transitional Youth: Implications

Problems Faced by Transitional Youth

- Economic challenges
 - Difficulties obtaining or paying for housing, utilities, food, and health care
 - Most surveyed youth indicated that their families have serious economic issues
 - Almost half (48%) said that in the past year they had to live on their own or at a friends because they had no where else to go

Mental Health challenges

- Anxiety, irritable mood, trouble getting along with family members, and problems with attention/concentration/focus were cited by 60% or more
- These problems had also been among the top five problems endorsed in the Phase 2 adolescent survey
- Relatively high rates of problems that are potentially life threatening (self-harm, eating disordered behaviors)
- High rates of stressful/traumatic events were found among pre-transitional youth, consistent also with Phase 2 adolescent survey

Phase 3: Transitional Youth: Implications

- Characteristics of the Youth Themselves May Present Barriers to Accessing Services
 - Key Informants see youth as often minimizing the severity of their physical and mental health problems, causing them to delay seeking treatment
 - Youth in Focus Groups acknowledged that lack of motivation to work hard might prevent some youth from pursuing gainful employment
 - Youth may view some services as stigmatizing
 - Key Informants repeatedly noted that many transitional youth appear to lack stable adult role models, which contributes to their lack of preparedness for adulthood
 - Lack financial resources, knowledge of services, transportation

Phase 3: Transitional Youth: Implications

Systemic Limitations to Accessing Available Services

- Employment-related services tend to be focused more on older individuals
- Food services may have eligibility and/or documentation requirements that present obstacles for transitional youth
- Limited availability of residential mental health and substance abuse services
- Many of the programs do not continue once youth reach the age of 18 and/or leave secondary education.
- Abrupt shift in service delivery systems as youth move from the child into the adult system, with accompanying shifts in intervention models, eligibility criteria and program philosophies
 - Programs for youth under the age of 18 often emphasize developmental concerns, outreach prevention and family engagement; programs for youth over 18 tend to reflect an emphasis on individually oriented programming and independence.

Phase 3: Transitional Youth: Recommendations (p. 1)

- Development of a coordinated cross-systems service delivery approach, involving integration of child/adolescent and adult service delivery systems
- Supportive services, such as transportation and meal provision, to encourage and enable participation in programs
- Comprehensive behavioral health services
 - Trauma-informed care
 - Promotion of resilience and recovery practices, youth empowerment, evidence-based treatment, and an integrated approach to mental health and substance use disorders
- Continued family involvement

Phase 3: Transitional Youth: Recommendations (p. 2)

- Coaching and mentoring regarding a broad range of economic, health, family planning, and social needs
- Education regarding available services and resources
- Supportive employment practices for youth with disabilities
- Active case management and outreach
- Use of social media to reach the target population

Detailed Reports of the 2010-2011 Wood County Family and Children First Council's Needs Assessments Are Available!

- Integrative Summary of Previous Needs Assessments
 - Dubow, E. F., Tompsett, C., Domoff, S, Kryszak, E., Meers, M., Reinemann, L., & Veits, G. (2010).
 Wood County Needs Assessment: Integrative Summary of Existing Reports. Department of Psychology,
 Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
- Survey of Parents of Children o-12 Years of Age
 - Dubow, E. F., Donnelly, W. O., Tompsett, C., Kryszak, E., Domoff, S., Veits, G., Meers, M., Joy, L., Hayman, J., Bradbury, S., Gorman, K., Reinemann, L., & Zbur, S. (2010). County-Wide Assessment of the Needs of Families and Children Ages o-12: A Survey of Community Residents in Wood County. Department of Psychology, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.

Survey of Adolescents

- Dubow, E. F., Donnelly, W. O., Tompsett, C., Kryszak, E., Domoff, S., Veits, G., Meers, M., Joy, L., Hayman, J., Bradbury, S., Gorman, K., Reinemann, L., & Zbur, S. (2011). County-Wide Assessment of the Needs of Adolescents: Part 1: A Survey of Wood County Adolescents. Department of Psychology, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
- Survey of Parents of Adolescents
 - Dubow, E. F., Donnelly, W. O., Tompsett, C., Kryszak, E., Hayman, J., Bradbury, S. (2011). County-Wide Assessment of the Needs of Adolescents: Part 2: A Survey of Wood County Parents of Adolescents. Department of Psychology, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.

Transitional Youth

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